

Union Fundamentals and Directions 2013-2015



L'agriculture familiale
toujours vraie!



*L'Union des
producteurs
agricoles*

Resolutions passed during the december 2013 Convention

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Union Fundamentals



*L'Union des
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The Union's Governing Framework

Fundamental values

The Union des producteurs agricoles (UPA) is a professional farm union organization. Its main purpose and style of action are based on the fundamental values of respect for the individual, solidarity, collective action, social justice, equity and democracy.

Mission

The UPA's primary mission, keeping these values in mind, is to promote, defend and develop the professional, economic, social and moral interests of Quebec agricultural and forestry producers, without distinction as to race, nationality, gender, language or beliefs.

Moreover, since the UPA interacts regularly with all Quebec society, it contributes to improving the social, economic and cultural life of rural communities.

Lastly, the UPA recognizes that Quebec agriculture and forestry is evolving in a context of world interactions and, consequently, it may align itself with collective action by agricultural and forestry producer groups both in other Canadian provinces and in other countries.

Fundamental principles

To translate its mission into concrete and committed actions, the Union abides by certain principles that have been defined over the years and that still serve to guide decisions on the future development of the agricultural and forestry sectors.

The guiding principles on which we base our actions are:

1. The Union brings together and represents all Quebec agricultural and forestry producers, without regard to the size or structure of their farm, the type of commodity they produce, or their place of residence.
2. To guarantee its independence, the UPA's operations are funded exclusively by all agricultural producers, through standard dues, as well as a check-off based on the quantity of farm and forestry production marketed.
3. The members control the union, in particular, through democratic ways of operating, a dynamic union life, and its funding method.



4. When setting priorities or developing services, collective interests must always prevail over individual or sectorial interests.
5. Collective action, lobbying activities, a steady presence in the public mind and partnership alliances are the Union's primary means of supporting its strategic directions.
6. By the stances it takes and its actions, the UPA promotes the preservation and development of family-owned, human-scale farms, essentially operated and managed by the family.
7. Agricultural and forestry producers must earn a fair income based on their cost of production, first through a collective approach to marketing, then through various complementary mechanisms that may be necessary, given the cyclical and structural characteristics of these sectors.
8. In order to be able to farm and to develop agriculture in Quebec, agricultural zones must be protected and priority must be given to farming activities in these zones.
9. Protection of the environment and the development of sustainable farming practices are fundamental elements in ensuring the survival of agriculture and agricultural operations.
10. Appropriate strategies must be devised to help aspiring young farmers have access to the farming profession and the farm union movement.
11. Agricultural training and consulting services are essential to the development of agricultural operations and must be available to all agricultural producers in Quebec.
12. The quality of farm life is an on-going concern, particularly through the prevention of accidents and occupational diseases.

WORKSHOP #1

**UNION INVOLVEMENT, LABOUR RELATIONS AND
AGRICULTURAL PROGRAMS**



*L'Union des
producteurs
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1. POLICY CONCERNING FARM START-UPS AND RETIREMENT

WHEREAS almost half of Quebec farm businesses have declared that they do not have a family successor;

WHEREAS a significant percentage of the 2000 members of the young farmers' federation do not come from the agricultural sector;

WHEREAS the current government policies for start-ups in agriculture are insufficient to ensure that the number of farms in Quebec will be maintained;

WHEREAS there is a sufficient number of young people ready to meet the challenge of establishing themselves in agriculture to fill the shortfall (almost 1000 diplomas in agriculture issued each year);

WHEREAS the main restriction for youth to establish themselves in agriculture is the high cost of agricultural assets and the increasing gap between the market value and the economic value of farms;

WHEREAS there is a need to review and update the policy on farm establishment (start-up), paying particular attention to the links between the retiring parties and the young or beginning farmers;

WHEREAS a mandate was given by the Premier to the Agriculture Minister at his swearing-in;

WHEREAS it is urgent to act effectively and courageously;

POLICY CONCERNING FARM START-UPS AND RETIREMENT (CONTINUED)

THE GENERAL CONGRESS THEREFORE CALLS UPON:

➤ The Quebec government

- to revise and update the policy for start-ups in agriculture, in order to include:
 - a renewed and improved Youth Policy;
 - appropriate support measures (including fiscal policy measures) for both young farmers and retiring farmers;
 - continued provision for training, increased flexibility of the training gateways and the development of programs to promote agriculture;
 - to create a Government-FRAQ-UPA-FAQ committee for the introduction and implementation of this new policy for agricultural start-ups and retirement;

➤ The Union

- to ensure the effective dissemination of information among all sections of the Union with regard to the support programs for business start-ups introduced by the specialized federations to support young farmers.

2. EMPLOYMENT INSURANCE REFORM

WHEREAS the reform of the employment insurance by the federal government (Bill C38) has generated major impacts;

WHEREAS this reform particularly affects seasonal workers who, by virtue of the new rules, must accept any work they are qualified for, under certain conditions regarding salary and distance from their residence, thus putting at risk the availability of the workers during the active season;

WHEREAS in agriculture and forestry, a high percentage of jobs are seasonal, which in itself represents a large part of the problem regarding our labour force;

WHEREAS farmers, foresters and the various levels of government have invested considerable time and effort to increase the skills and productivity of farm workers;

WHEREAS it is presently difficult to recruit and retain qualified and experienced workers;

WHEREAS it is important to continue to raise the awareness of government to the specific characteristics of the agriculture and forestry sectors;

WHEREAS many food processors are also affected by the reform;

WHEREAS the productivity of food processors has an impact on the agricultural sector;

EMPLOYMENT INSURANCE REFORM (CONTINUED)

THE GENERAL CONGRESS THEREFORE CALLS UPON:

➤ The Union

- to continue its active involvement in the Coalition Against Employment Insurance Reform, in order to convince the federal government to abandon this reform;
- to make the necessary representations:
 - to raise awareness with regard to the importance of skilled, qualified seasonal workers in agriculture and forestry businesses;
 - to adapt the employment insurance benefits to regional realities, in particular those of the agriculture and forestry sectors;
 - to collaborate with food processors in these representations.

3. THE LABOUR CODE AND FARM WORKERS

WHEREAS workers employed on a farm operation are not considered to be salaried workers under article 21(5) of the Labour Code, unless there are a minimum of three workers employed on a continuous, day-to-day basis;

WHEREAS a ruling by the Quebec Superior Court in March 2013 gave the Quebec government a period of one year to modify article 21(5) of the Labour Code in order to make it compatible with article 2(D) of the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms;

WHEREAS the specific conditions that characterized the agricultural sector at the time when the legislator established this exemption in the Labour Code are still prevalent today, i.e.:

- Multiple small production units that hire few or no regular workers;
- Mostly seasonal production;
- Work planning is dependent on the life cycle of plants and animals, as well as on climatic conditions;
- The necessity to protect the life and health of plants and animals;
- Perishable products, etc.;

THE GENERAL CONGRESS THEREFORE CALLS UPON:

➤ **The Labour Minister and the government**

- to establish a specific labour relations regime for farms with three permanent employees or less.

4. RAISING AWARENESS AMONG PRIMARY AND SECONDARY STUDENTS TO THE REALITIES OF THE AGRICULTURAL AND FOREST RECEPTORS

WHEREAS today, the majority of children no longer have direct contact with farmers and foresters;

WHEREAS the educational programs at the primary and secondary levels do not permit students to obtain a knowledge of the realities of the agricultural and forestry sectors;

WHEREAS within the framework of its Youth Program, the UPA organizes meetings between students and farmers and foresters within the school milieu;

RAISING AWARENESS AMONG PRIMARY AND SECONDARY STUDENTS TO THE REALITIES OF THE AGRICULTURAL AND FOREST RECEPTORS (CONTINUED)

THE GENERAL CONGRESS THEREFORE CALLS UPON:

➤ The Union

- to continue and even increase the activities of its Youth Program, in both French and English;
 - also, to provide sufficient funding from its Promotion of the Profession fund, in order to ensure the program's development in the regions;
- to publicize the activities available in its Youth Program to the schools;
- to make the necessary representations in order that courses at the primary and secondary levels include notions of agriculture and forestry in their content;
- to increase the awareness of career counselors in the schools concerning the availability of job possibilities in agriculture and to promote their advantages;
- to continue its work regarding the promotion of job opportunities in agriculture;
- to increase the number of Union ambassadors;
- to inform and provide the tools, developed by age group, to farmers who are not necessarily Union ambassadors but who are called upon to meet with students;

➤ The Ministry of Education, Recreation and Sports

- to include in its programs a component to increase awareness of the realities of the agricultural and forestry sectors.

5. COOPERATIVES FOR HIRING FARM LABORERS AND DOMESTIC HELP

WHEREAS numerous Coops for hiring farm labourers (known as CUMOs) also created branches for hiring domestic help workers;

WHEREAS the financial support programs for these projects ended in 2013;

WHEREAS these projects meet an ever-present need of farm families;

WHEREAS certain eligibility criteria of the program were not well adapted to the realities of all farm families (e.g., age, percentage of shares in the business, etc.);

THE GENERAL CONGRESS THEREFORE CALLS UPON:

➤ **MAPAQ**

- to renew the funding of this program or to introduce, as soon as possible, another support program for farm labourers;
- to revise the eligibility criteria of such a program in order to ensure that all farm families may have access.

6. MAINTAINING THE PAFRAPD

WHEREAS the Quebec government has authorized the continuance of the *Programme d'appui financière aux regroupements et aux associations de producteurs désignés* (PAFRAPD) [Support Program for Designated Farmer Groups and Associations] for only one year, specifically until March 31, 2014;

WHEREAS this program is of great importance to 72 groups and associations, which represent 14,000 farm businesses;

WHEREAS this program, introduced to compensate for the closing of the casinos operating at agricultural expositions, provides funding for innovative and structuring projects to increase productivity, profitability and competitiveness in the concerned sectors;

WHEREAS the funding given to the designated associations is made known in April, when their financial year is already underway, thus making project planning more difficult;

THE GENERAL CONGRESS THEREFORE CALLS UPON:

➤ **The Quebec government**

- to ensure the renewal of the PAFRAPD for an additional period of five years;
- to announce to the various groups in November the budgets allocated for the following year;
- to give more latitude to the groups and associations to manage the allocated budgets.

7. EXEMPTION FOR FOOD PROCESSING AND SALES AT THE FARM LEVEL (BILL R-20)

WHEREAS the *Act respecting labour relations, professional development and labour management* in Quebec's construction industry, commonly known as Bill R-20, is in effect;

WHEREAS the *Commission de la Construction du Québec* (CCQ) considers that the construction of buildings used for on-farm food processing and farm product sales is governed by this law;

WHEREAS many agricultural businesses engage in activities of conditioning, processing and the sale of agricultural products in buildings on the farm;

WHEREAS farming operations benefit from an exclusion from this law;

THE GENERAL CONGRESS THEREFORE CALLS UPON:

➤ **The Quebec government**

- to modify the wording of Bill R-20's exclusion clause that benefits agricultural operations, to include all activities of conditioning, food processing and the sale of products done in a building on the farm.

8. TRANSPORTATION OF COMPROMISED ANIMALS

WHEREAS federal authorities have significantly tightened up the application of Part XII of the Animal Health Regulation respecting the transportation of animals;

WHEREAS modifications were made to the policy on compromised animals in February 2013 with regard to the definition of lameness;

WHEREAS the assessment of the fitness of an animal to be transported is somewhat subjective;

WHEREAS at the time of loading an animal, it can be difficult for a farmer or carrier to anticipate the progression of the state of health of the animals during transport and at its arrival at the destination;

WHEREAS some livestock carriers have received fines under the *Regulation respecting animal health* and are therefore increasingly hesitant concerning the evaluation of the helpless animals, some even refusing to transport a compromised animal so as not to take any risks;

WHEREAS the farmer is then forced to slaughter his animal;

WHEREAS farmers are in agreement with the principles stipulated in the regulations and have reiterated their commitment to animal welfare, but do not want to be unduly penalized;

WHEREAS there could be a delay of up to two years between the alleged infraction and the issuing of a violation notice to this effect by the CFIA to the concerned farmers and carriers;

WHEREAS the penalties can be excessive, up to \$4000 for the first offense;

WHEREAS jurisprudence in the Doyon case showed evidence of abuse of procedure regarding the issuing of violation notices by the CFIA, and in the judgment handed down in the Doyon case it was mentioned that the CFIA should issue warnings and show a progression in the level of penalties;

Transportation of compromised animals (CONTINUED)

THE GENERAL CONGRESS THEREFORE CALLS UPON:

- **The UPA and the concerned specialized groups**
 - to review with federal authorities the method of determining the status of an animal that is compromised or unfit for transport, in order to clarify, evaluate and relax evaluation methods used by inspectors;
 - to collaborate with the partners involved in the transportation of livestock, in order to develop and disseminate methods to help farmers to take action before an animal becomes unfit for transport and to evaluate the health status of animals before transport;
 - to make the necessary representations to the CFIA in order to ensure that violation notices are sent out within a maximum delay of 30 days from the time an alleged infraction is observed under the *Regulation respecting the transportation of compromised animals*;
- **the CFIA**
 - to require that warnings be issued to farmers and livestock carriers before issuing a violation notice;
 - to require that the monetary penalties be lowered and applied progressively;
- **the Union**
 - to evaluate the feasibility of having a mobile abattoir visit farms in order to recuperate the meat from compromised animals.

9. ANIMAL HEALTH AND WELFARE

WHEREAS animal health and welfare are societal issues that concern all active livestock sectors, for both domestic and export markets;

WHEREAS, in order to deal with this concern, various sectors have adopted or revise their codes of good practice and have introduced food safety programs at the farm level;

WHEREAS, in 2010, the Quebec government adopted a Quebec Strategy for Animal Health and Welfare, which aims at ensuring an "animal health regime that is humane, economic and environmentally sound," and to encourage the adoption of animal husbandry methods that strike an equitable balance between the expectations of the general population and the requirements of the biofood industry;

WHEREAS farmers are partners in this strategy;

WHEREAS the strategy recognizes that the necessary investments must be shared in a fair and competitive manner between the concerned businesses, the markets and society;

WHEREAS, at the same time, MAPAQ announced its intention to withdraw from certain programs concerning animal health, while asking the industry to take its place;

WHEREAS many production sectors do not have the financial or technical means to take MAPAQ's place;

WHEREAS farmers do not always have the capacity to make the necessary investments to bring livestock buildings and equipment up to the standards to meet the expectations of society regarding animal health, especially since, in most cases, this does not translate into any increase in market prices;

WHEREAS technical solutions are not always available in Quebec, which tends to increase the cost and risks for agricultural businesses;

WHEREAS the required investments can cause some farms to go out of business;

Animal health and welfare (CONTINUED)

THE GENERAL CONGRESS THEREFORE CALLS UPON:

- **MAPAQ and the Quebec and federal governments**
 - to cease their withdrawal and to fully assume their responsibilities with regard to animal health and protection;
 - to develop, in collaboration with the users, and introduce investment support programs to cover the majority of costs associated with bringing up to standards the livestock buildings and equipment to meet the societal demands regarding animal welfare;
 - to ensure that the efforts of farmers to meet the societal demands regarding animal health and welfare translate into an added-value to their products and that farmers are the sole beneficiaries of this added-value;

- **The Union and concerned specialized federations**
 - to ensure that the animal welfare rules are acceptable to farmers;
 - to ensure that the delays to implement the new rules respect the capacity of farm to adapt.

WORKSHOP #2

INCOME SECURITY, TRADE AND COMMERCE



10. THE COMPREHENSIVE ECONOMIC AND TRADE AGREEMENT (CETA) BETWEEN CANADA AND THE EUROPEAN UNION

WHEREAS, on October 18, 2013, Canada's Prime Minister, Stephen Harper, signed an agreement-in-principle with regard to the main issues being dealt with in the CETA negotiations;

WHEREAS, by this agreement-in-principle, the federal government has accepted to give the EU an additional market access of 17,700 tons of cheese;

WHEREAS, in addition to being a disconnection from the motion unanimously adopted by the Canadian Parliament in 2005 with regard to a balanced trade position, these concessions will have a major impact on the Québec dairy sector, particularly on the high-quality specialty cheese market;

WHEREAS these additional imports could represent up to 30 per cent of the Canadian specialty cheese market at the retail sales level;

WHEREAS the lost revenues due to the arrival of 17,700 additional tons of cheese on our markets are measurable and will amount to over \$300 million annually for our producers and cheesemakers;

WHEREAS this concession by Canada has the effect of giving to the European Union the fruits of all the efforts made by the industry over the past 20 years for the development of the specialty cheese sector, including investments for promotion by dairy producers of more than \$100 million;

WHEREAS Québec produces more than 50 per cent of Canadian cheeses and over 60 per cent of specialty and artisan cheeses, and that the sector is one of the jewels of Québec's agrifood industry;

WHEREAS 80 per cent of the goats' milk produced and processed in Québec is used to make specialty cheeses and that this is an emerging sector;

WHEREAS the Québec government was consulted and was directly involved in the negotiation of this agreement, which also requires the acceptance by the provinces for its final ratification;

THE COMPREHENSIVE ECONOMIC AND TRADE AGREEMENT (CETA) BETWEEN CANADA AND THE EUROPEAN UNION (CONTINUED)

WHEREAS, in its press release on October 18 signifying its support for the agreement-in-principle, the Québec government declared to have received "a firm commitment" from the federal government promising that compensation measures are planned for farmers, namely:

- "to compensate for future losses of revenue due to the increased import allowance;
- to tighten up the entry of over-quota cheese;
- to implement tighter border controls in the short term;
- to take more into account Québec's market share when issuing import licenses."

WHEREAS, in the same press release, it was specifically indicated that "it has been agreed that these mechanisms must be announced in detail before the final ratification of CETA;"

WHEREAS the Canadian government will continue to be under pressure to open markets for products under supply management when negotiating other agreements, such as the TransPacific Partnership;

WHEREAS the federal and provincial governments both formally committed themselves to defend the integrity of supply management;

THE GENERAL CONGRESS THEREFORE CALLS UPON:

➤ The Canadian government

- to ratify this agreement-in-principle only if all of the following conditions are met:

1. Terms and conditions of the agreement

- That the market access conceded for European cheeses be lowered in order to take into account the real growth rate and the fragility of the market specifically affected;
- that the proposed period to implement the new conceded market access be lengthened significantly;

THE COMPREHENSIVE ECONOMIC AND TRADE AGREEMENT (CETA) BETWEEN CANADA AND THE EUROPEAN UNION (CONTINUED)

- that the allocation of the conceded market share for specialty and industrial cheeses be calculated separately, in order to minimize the impacts;

2. Border controls

- In the short term, that the Canadian border controls be tightened, for example, by ceasing to issue additional import permits;
- that the circumvention of tariff quotas be curtailed (e.g., pizza topping mixtures) and that tariff classification errors by the Canadian Food Inspection Agency (CFIA) be corrected, particularly with regard to dairy ingredients;
- that the conditions imposed on the production and processing of all agricultural products be at least as stringent for imported products as they are on similar products in Canada;

3. Other

- that the regulations on labeling and the composition of dairy products be tightened and applied rigorously;
- that the attribution and management of the additional quotas conceded to Europe be done in a way that the impact on Canadian cheesemakers and farmers is minimized;
- that the financial compensations promised by the government be comprehensive and structuring. In addition, both these and any other compensation measures should be determined, announced and conform to the expectations of producers and cheesemakers before the final ratification of the agreement;
- to make no further concessions during other trade negotiations concerning supply management in order to maintain its integrity;
- that the financial compensations promised by the government be attributed while taking into account the niche markets such as goat and ewes milk.

**THE COMPREHENSIVE ECONOMIC AND TRADE AGREEMENT
(CETA) BETWEEN CANADA AND THE EUROPEAN UNION
(CONTINUED)**

➤ **The Québec government**

- to exercise leadership in dealing with the federal government so that it will clarify, disseminate and implement all of the compensation measures alluded to in this resolution, as soon as possible;
- to not ratify the final agreement until these measures are satisfactory to the producers affected by this agreement.

11. PRINCIPLES AND THE ADAPTATION OF AGRICULTURAL INCOME SECURITY PROGRAMS

WHEREAS farmers must deal with a multitude of risks, whether climatic, infectious diseases, market-related, subsidies given in other countries, etc.;

WHEREAS agriculture is a major economic sector, but often with its own particularities in terms of risks associated with the marketing of agricultural and agrifood products;

WHEREAS the income security programs have positive spinoffs on all of the stakeholders in the agricultural value chain, both upstream and downstream from production;

WHEREAS MAPAQ is in the process of evaluating its income security programs, which should be completed by 2014;

WHEREAS there are many shortcomings in the current income security programs;

WHEREAS the recent budget cuts in the federal risk management programs have significantly reduced the coverage provided for those productions without supply management or not admissible for ASRA;

WHEREAS the ASRA program has shown some significant deficiencies over the past several years in its capacity to adequately and effectively support businesses in the production sectors that experienced crisis situations;

WHEREAS the link between the ASRA program and the *AgriInvest* and *Agri-Québec* programs has brought about some unfairness between producers, particularly when certain funding is spread over several years;

THE GENERAL CONGRESS THEREFORE CALL UPON:

➤ MAPAQ and the FADQ

- To adopt income security programs that are:
 - fair and equitable to all productions;
 - directed towards agricultural businesses that have lost income;

PRINCIPLES AND THE ADAPTATION OF AGRICULTURAL INCOME SECURITY PROGRAMS (CONTINUED)

- based on the real production costs for all sectors;
- adapted to the realities of each production sector;
- accompanied by flexible programs that can meet regional particularities;
- to advocate with the government to the effect that income security is an essential safety net for the development of our agriculture and our regions;
- to allocate the necessary long-term budgets to the income security programs in order to ensure sustainability and maximize the benefits for the development of the targeted production sectors and for the economy of our regions;
- to allocate sufficient funding to cover the cost of production for the sectors that are not covered by ASRA;

➤ **The FADQ**

- To revise the calculation for farmers' salary in the ASRA cost-of-production model, in order to pay at a higher rate the hours worked for the management of the business, compared to that presently paid in the calculation for the totality of hours (rate based on the salary of a skilled labourer), or by using any other method that will have the effect of increasing the farm operator's salary;
- to revise and consider the salaries of family workers for their real worth;
- to establish the cost of production in the ASRA models on the basis of the totality of real expenses of a business for the production targeted in the survey, but specifically excluding all of its other productions and activities, whether related or not;
- to make sure that the methodology used to establish the cost of production in the ASRA models will ensure the sustainability of the businesses;

➤ **The Union**

- to clearly reaffirm to government authorities the critical role played by the income security programs in agriculture, as being one of the pillars of development of agriculture in Québec.

12. "AGRI" PROGRAMS

WHEREAS the federal government has recently:

- Lowered the trigger level and the rate of protection of the *AgriStability* program from 85 to 70 per cent of the historic margin;
- reduced the government contribution in the *AgriInvest* program from 1.5% to 1% of the allowable net sales (ANS);

WHEREAS these cuts represent a decrease in payments of between 33 and 50 per cent for these two programs;

WHEREAS the productions admissible to ASRA will be affected by these cuts;

WHEREAS the productions not admissible to ASRA and not covered by supply management are directly affected by these cuts, which represent, on average, a reduction in payments in the order of \$24 million per year;

WHEREAS the development of these production sectors cannot be done without adequate support programs for risk management and income security;

THE GENERAL CONGRESS THEREFORE CALLS UPON:

➤ **MAPAQ**

- to cover the shortfalls due to the cuts to the federal *AgriStability* and *AgriInvest* programs and to plan for the necessary budgets.

13. THE CEILING ON THE AGRIIINVEST AND AGRI-QUÉBEC PROGRAMS

WHEREAS the AgriInvest and Agri-Québec programs both have limits on the adjusted allowable net sales (ANS) admissible for the \$1.5-million government contribution;

WHEREAS Ontario's horticultural producers have access to a provincial program similar to Agri-Québec, which has an incremental payment method and where all of the ANS is eligible for government payments;

WHEREAS the non-admissible ANS for a government contribution in Agri-Québec represents, for some sectors, up to 40 per cent of the value of the production;

WHEREAS these elements affect the competitiveness of Québec horticulture businesses;

THE GENERAL CONGRESS THEREFORE CALLS UPON:

- **MAPAQ and the FADQ**
 - To remove the ceiling in the Agri-Québec program for horticulture production.

14. IMPLEMENTATION OF THE FOOD SOVEREIGNTY POLICY

WHEREAS the Québec government adopted a Food Sovereignty Policy in May 2013;

WHEREAS this policy is based on four axes: the identification of Québec food products; the dynamic use of the territory; the promotion of the sector's economic potential and sustainable development;

WHEREAS the three main objectives of the Policy are:

- to provide to all Quebecers a high quality, fairly-priced and healthy food supply;
- to increase the percentage of Québec food products consumed by Quebecers;
- to develop a prosperous biofood sector, well-paying, generating jobs, respectful of the environment and contributing to the dynamic use of the Québec land-base;

WHEREAS, since 2009, farmers have adopted the concept of food sovereignty as the cornerstone of their vision of the future;

WHEREAS many of the proposals made by the UPA can be found in the Policy tabled by the government, including a proposal to create a *Table de concertation des partenaires du bioalimentaire québécois* [Québec Biofood Round Table];

IMPLEMENTATION OF THE FOOD SOVEREIGNTY POLICY (CONTINUED)

THE GENERAL CONGRESS THEREFORE CALLS UPON:

➤ The Québec government

- to make sure that the programs and measures that are developed from the Policy are well adapted to the realities of farmers and of all regions of Québec;
- to implement the commitments specified in the Policy by developing programs, strategies and concrete measures to stimulate growth, to adequately support agricultural businesses and to ensure the integrity of the producers' collective tools;
- to share strategic information on the various elements of the Food Sovereignty Policy with the Québec Biofood Round Table;

➤ The Union

- to actively participate in the Québec Biofood Round Table, which will bring together the senior executives of the principal organizations that represent the various links in the biofood value chain and other concerned partners of Québec society;
- to make sure that the government promises are implemented and translate into concrete actions susceptible to stimulate growth, to adequately support agricultural businesses and to ensure the integrity of our collective tools;
- to keep farmers and affiliates well informed on the various elements arising from the Food Sovereignty Policy.

15. FAIRNESS WITHIN THE AGRIFOOD VALUE CHAIN AND COLLECTIVE MARKETING

WHEREAS there is practically a total lack of transparency in determining the profit margins of the various links in the agrifood value chain, in the distribution practices and in establishing retail prices;

WHEREAS the sharing of the risks between farmers and buyers is not fairly balanced;

WHEREAS the collective marketing mechanisms allow greater transparency regarding information on conditions and prices offered to farmers, and a more equitable balance of power in order to face the increasing concentration of buyers and distributors;

WHEREAS the cost of production surveys have shown that farmers have redoubled their efforts and have adopted various measures that have improved the productivity of their businesses;

WHEREAS these improvements however are totally absorbed in the income support programs;

FAIRNESS WITHIN THE AGRIFOOD VALUE CHAIN AND COLLECTIVE MARKETING (CONTINUED)

THE GENERAL CONGRESS THEREFORE CALLS UPON:

➤ The Québec government

- to develop a strategy that will lead to a more equitable distribution of revenues between the industry stakeholders, in order that farmers may obtain a fair price for their products, respecting their costs of production;
- to acknowledge that the *Act respecting collective marketing* represents an essential pillar for the development of Québec's agrifood and forestry sectors, and is a tool that permits a greater transparency of information on the conditions and prices offered to agricultural producers;
- to put in place mechanisms to monitor prices and profit margins of the various links in the agrifood value chain (input suppliers, processors, distributors, retailers), in order to permit greater transparency for all stakeholders;
- to develop a method whereby farmers can profit from their part of an increase in productivity and thereby recognize their efforts in reducing production costs;

➤ The Union

- to work together with the affiliated groups on any project that can improve transparency and equity within the value chain, within a framework of collective marketing;
- to continue to increase awareness among the industry stakeholders on the advantages and possibilities derived from collective marketing.

16. ACCESS TO MARKETS

WHEREAS, in its Food Sovereignty Policy, the Québec government hopes to increase from 33% to 50% the percentage of fresh and processed Québec food products on consumers' plates;

WHEREAS 86% of Quebecers' food purchases are done at big-box retailers, 70% of which are at the big-three players in the food distribution sector;

WHEREAS the requirements and access conditions to the shelves of the large distributors represent a major problem for producers and processors;

WHEREAS access to the hotel, restaurant and institutional (HRI) network by producers and producer/processors is difficult and the conditions and requirements to do so are not well-known;

WHEREAS the various programs introduced by MAPAQ since the publication of the Food Sovereignty Policy demonstrate a willingness, but which cannot, by itself, answer the various concerns regarding market access for Québec agricultural products:

WHEREAS the UPA, the *Association des détaillants en alimentation* (ADA) and the *Conseil de la transformation agroalimentaire et des produits de consommation* (CTAC) have jointly reiterated their request that discussions be held between the principal partners of the Québec Biofood Round Table concerning the issue of access of Québec food products to grocery store shelves;

WHEREAS certain requirements and standards are not applied as rigorously to imported products;

WHEREAS *Aliments du Québec* and *Aliments préparés du Québec* are two trademarks belonging to all of the partners of the agrifood industry, and administered by the *Conseil de promotion de l'agroalimentaire québécois*;

WHEREAS an increasing number of winemakers, cider makers and Québec craft brewers producing alcoholic beverages in Québec have difficulty in selling their products on the shelves of supermarkets, corner stores and SAQ outlets;

WHEREAS the *Société des alcools du Québec* (SAQ) is a government corporation with a mandate to sell alcoholic beverages in Québec;

ACCESS TO MARKETS (CONTINUED)

THE GENERAL CONGRESS THEREFORE CALLS UPON:

➤ The Québec government

- to take advantage of the present favourable conditions of cooperation between the industry stakeholders, in order to put in place, as soon as possible, in collaboration with the principal agrifood partners:
 - an action plan to increase the percentage of Québec food products in the main distribution network;
 - realistic targets and objectives;
 - an implementation plan;
- to introduce a "Buy Québec" supply policy in the network of public and parapublic institutions and government corporations, by adopting measures to favour the purchase of Québec products when calling for public tenders;
- to define a measurable indicator to monitor the percentage of Québec agricultural products in the major supermarket chains and in public and parapublic institutions and government corporations and to use this indicator to raise awareness among the general population;
- to introduce a mechanism that will allow reciprocity of standards for imported products;
- to increase investments for the promotion of Québec products through the *Aliments du Québec* program;
- to direct the *Société des alcools du Québec* (SAQ):
 - to increase the promotion, visibility and access for Québec craft alcoholic beverages in its outlets;
 - to increase access to shelf space and to its commercial programs for Québec craft alcoholic beverage producers;
- to better identify Québec products on store shelves;
- to encourage municipalities to adopt "buy local" strategies.

17. SUPPORT FOR THE DEVELOPMENT OF BUSINESSES

WHEREAS MAPAQ's programs for its Support Strategy for the Adaptation of Agricultural Businesses have permitted numerous agricultural businesses to benefit from significant financial aid to improve their efficiency since 2010;

WHEREAS the admissibility criteria for the Support Strategy have led to the exclusion of many businesses, including contract farmers;

WHEREAS MAPAQ and the FADQ restrict admissibility to certain programs based on the gross revenue of the business;

WHEREAS certain land improvement work is necessary in many regions in order to optimize the soil quality;

WHEREAS the Support for Diversification and Regional Development program does not offer direct financial aid for land improvement work, but only covers the interest paid on a loan for this type of work;

WHEREAS the human resources available to advise farmers in their actions are limited;

WHEREAS the government aid given through this type of program creates a lever effect for the participating agricultural businesses;

WHEREAS the economic and agricultural realities are not the same in all of the administrative regions of the province;

SUPPORT FOR THE DEVELOPMENT OF BUSINESSES (CONTINUED)

THE GENERAL CONGRESS THEREFORE CALLS UPON:

➤ MAPAQ

- To renew the programs under its Support Strategy for the Adaptation of Agricultural Businesses, for a sufficiently long period to avoid administrative bottlenecks;
- to offer direct aid for land improvement work;

➤ MAPAQ and the FADQ

- To expand the admission criteria of their programs so that all agricultural businesses, including contract farmers, can have equal access, and also to allocate the necessary budgets;
- to make their programs accessible in all administrative regions of Québec that have disadvantaged sub-regions;
- to open the programs to all production sectors.

18. FINANCING – THE MISSION AND ROLE OF THE FINANCIÈRE AGRICOLE DU QUÉBEC (FADQ)

WHEREAS the *Financière agricole du Québec* (FADQ) has a mission to support and promote the development of agriculture and agrifood, especially at the production level;

WHEREAS farmers require the unwavering support of the FADQ, particularly during the more difficult financial periods;

WHEREAS the FADQ more and more frequently requires farmers in certain productions to obtain a contract with an integrator before granting them a loan guarantee at a financial institution;

WHEREAS this requirement forces farmers directly towards the integration option;

WHEREAS not all producers are supported to the same degree by the State;

WHEREAS rules have been imposed upon the FADQ that limit its flexibility to fully assume its role to support the development of agricultural businesses;

THE GENERAL CONGRESS THEREFORE CALLS UPON:

➤ The FADQ

- to fully assume its role with regard to agricultural financing and to take more risks in these files in order to adequately support farmers in their projects;
- to no longer require farmers to have an integration contract;

➤ The Québec government

- to give the FADQ the necessary financial and decisional flexibility in order that it may fulfill its role to support the development of agricultural businesses.

WORKSHOP #3

LAND USE PLANNING AND THE ENVIRONMENT



***L'Union des
producteurs
agricoles***

19. THE PRESERVATION OF AGRICULTURAL LAND AND AGRICULTURAL ACTIVITIES

WHEREAS the *Act respecting the preservation of agricultural land and agricultural activities* (known in French as the LPTAA) is one of Québec's principal tools for the development of its agriculture;

WHEREAS the LPTAA is administered for the entire province by the *Commission de protection du territoire agricole* (CPTAQ) and that this organization must conserve its principal role of protecting farmland and agricultural activities, as well as its ability to make decisions;

WHEREAS the publication of the Food Sovereignty Policy includes a modification to the LPTAA in order to make more room for a diversity of agricultural business models;

WHEREAS the LPTAA includes all the necessary tools to permit the development of communities, particularly in rural areas, in terms of long-term planning;

WHEREAS, because of requests for the de-zoning of farmland, the introduction and/or expansion of non-agricultural usages and issues of cohabitation, certain articles of the current LPTAA require some strengthening to provide increased protection, not only for farmland, but also for the farming activities practiced on it;

WHEREAS the automatic authorization of subdivision of areas greater than 25 ha for agricultural purposes will not do anything towards the development of agriculture, except perhaps increase the price of farmland, since presently over three-quarters of Québec farms have less than 50 ha;

WHEREAS the LPTAA has priority over provisions contained in any general or special law applicable to communities or municipalities, as well as over any incompatible provisions contained in the Land-use and Development Plans, the master plans or any zoning, subdivision or construction regulations;

WHEREAS it is necessary to make sure that the LPTAA takes priority over the powers given to municipalities with regard to nuisances, in order to avoid that some municipalities may consider legitimate agricultural activities as penal infractions;

WHEREAS it is necessary that inconveniences inherent to normal farming activities be tolerated between neighbors in the agricultural zone;

THE PRESERVATION OF AGRICULTURAL LAND AND AGRICULTURAL ACTIVITIES (CONTINUED)

THE GENERAL CONGRESS THEREFORE CALLS UPON:

➤ The Québec government

- to maintain and strengthen the provisions of the LPTAA, consistent with the publication of its Food Sovereignty Policy;
- to require that the applicants for authorizations prove that there is no other space available outside the agricultural zone, and also to oblige them to take into account the possibility of increasing the density of residential, institutional, commercial and industrial spaces as a prerequisite to any request for exclusions from the agricultural zone, as well as for any application to introduce or expand a non-agricultural usage;
- to refuse to issue any authorization for exclusion for the purpose of expanding urban perimeters for at least 15 years in the Metropolitan Communities (MC) as well as in the MRCs adjacent to the MCs;
- to strengthen the provisions of the LPTAA to ensure the immunity of farmers when exercising their profession, as long as they cultivate their land and raise their livestock while respecting established farming practices, for example:
 - to introduce a definition of the term "nuisance" in Article 1 and add to Article 98 of the LPTAA, confirming the priority status of the said law over all nuisance regulations emanating from laws under municipal jurisdiction;
 - to strengthen the principle of immunity from civil prosecution that already exists, to include inconveniences due to heating (smoke) and lighting (luminosity);
 - to modify the applicable legislative tools in order to better limit the rights of municipalities to declare as a nuisance any legitimate agricultural practice performed under the rules of standard good practice and also to introduce immunity from penal prosecution and make other necessary civil adjustments for these practices, when performed within these rules;

THE PRESERVATION OF AGRICULTURAL LAND AND AGRICULTURAL ACTIVITIES (CONTINUED)

- to maintain under the jurisdiction of the CPTAQ the assessment of all requests for farm subdivision for agricultural purposes;
- to define the criteria concerning the issue of regional particularities, as set out in Article 12 of the LPTAA, in order that they meet the requirement of ensuring the useful occupation and vitality of the territory;
- to correct the situation of acquired rights, particularly in Articles 101.1 and 105 of the LPTAA, which presently facilitate the introduction of non-agricultural usages;
- to make it compulsory to obtain an authorization from the CPTAQ for the issuance of a mining claim in the agricultural zone, and to prohibit mining exploration and exploitation in so-called "dynamic" zones, as set out in the Land Use and Development Plans of the concerned MRC, or via a decision of the CPTAQ under Article 59 of the LPTAA;
- to provide the CPTAQ with the necessary human and financial resources in order to fully accomplish its role, particularly in ensuring the proper processing of all requests submitted and a follow-up on its decisions, in order to ensure the sustainability of the agricultural zone and the development of agricultural activities;
- to maintain the role of the UPA in the eventual project to revise and strengthen the LPTAA.

20. LAND GRABBING AND THE "FINANCIALIZATION" OF AGRICULTURAL LAND

WHEREAS the phenomenon of land grabbing and the financialization of agricultural land for land speculation or other purposes has greatly increased over the past several years;

WHEREAS this phenomenon contributes to subtracting significant areas of farmland that cannot be used by farmers;

WHEREAS the acquisition of farmland by non-farmers creates a ripple effect on increasing farmland prices, which farmers and their successors are not able to compete against while maintaining the sustainability of their businesses;

WHEREAS the price increases for farmland caused by this phenomenon of land grabbing and financialization have a significant impact on property taxes, on the Property Tax Rebate Program and on MAPAQ's budgets allocated for agriculture;

WHEREAS it is important to support the development and consolidation of agricultural businesses and to facilitate the establishment of young farmers;

WHEREAS the present government policies concerning the establishment of young farmers in agriculture are insufficient to maintain the number of farms in Québec;

WHEREAS studies have been done in recent years by the *Institut de recherche économique contemporaine* (IRÉC), as well as other consultation activities and representations by the UPA with farmers and government;

LAND GRABBING AND THE "FINANCIALIZATION" OF AGRICULTURAL LAND (CONTINUED)

THE GENERAL CONGRESS THEREFORE CALLS UPON:

➤ MAPAQ

- to propose measures, following consultations with the UPA, to limit the phenomenon of land grabbing and the financialization of agricultural land, to intervene in farmland transactions and to protect farms, for example:
 - a portrait and strategic monitoring of farmland transactions;
 - the creation of an organization (either existing or new) that can intervene in the transfer of farmland, giving priority to young farmers and to the existing farmers who cultivate it;
 - the creation of a Québec Agricultural Development Fund;
 - introduction of fiscal measures to promote the use of farmland for agricultural purposes, thus favouring the establishment of young farmers;
 - the creation and management of a land bank;
 - an obligation for purchasers of farmland to cultivate it or have it cultivated by others;
 - legislation to govern the leasing of farms;

➤ MAPAQ and the Québec government

- To consider this issue as a priority, by adopting appropriate legislative measures and actions;

➤ the UPA

- to propose measures to control and protect farmland and, as a last resort, to consider the right of pre-emption, if necessary;
- to inform and consult with its members during the principal phases in implementing the above-mentioned measures.

21. AGRICULTURAL ZONE DEVELOPMENT PLANS

WHEREAS the intentions of the government, as set out in its Food Sovereignty Policy, are based on the widespread implementation of Agricultural Zone Development Plans (known in French as PDZAs) by the Regional County Municipalities (or MRCs);

WHEREAS the PDZA is an effective tool to bring together all the stakeholders of a community around a concerted vision for the promotion and development of agriculture and forestry;

WHEREAS a PDZA allows an MRC, in collaboration with the other stakeholders of the community, to characterize its territory, to identify the problematic issues, to plan and promote its agricultural zone in a manner that will encourage the sustainable development of agricultural and forestry activities;

WHEREAS financial resources should be made available for the implementation of tangible actions – a key element in encouraging the mobilization of all concerned players;

THE GENERAL CONGRESS THEREFORE CALLS UPON:

➤ **The UPA**

- to provide the necessary technical support and coaching to aid the regional federations in the development and implementation of the PDZAs;
- to work closely with the regional federations in order to prepare the proper tools to meet the particular needs to develop agriculture at the local level;

➤ **the government**

- To provide financing for the preparation and implementation of PDZAs and to recognize the UPA as the legitimate voice of the agricultural community in various workgroups;
- optimal use of their land-base by agricultural activities, while ensuring their protection;

AGRICULTURAL ZONE DEVELOPMENT PLANS (CONTINUED)

- **the MRCs**
 - to begin, without further delay and in collaboration with the UPA for those not already engaged in the PDZA process, the characterization and the implementation of actions that favour the
- **the government, the MRCs and the UPA**
 - to work together in the preparation of mobilizing and viable projects, capable of accelerating the development of the regional agricultural and forestry potentials, in keeping with the objectives expressed in the new Food Sovereignty Policy;
- **MAPAQ and the Ministère des Affaires municipales, des Régions et de l'Occupation du Territoire (MAMROT)**
 - to ensure that the dynamic use of the territory within the agricultural zone favours:
 - the establishment of young farmers;
 - harmonious coexistence between neighbours;
 - the use of farmland for farming purposes;
 - to make sure that no exemptions are given with regard to the agricultural use of the land in a dynamic agricultural zone, as identified in the MRC's Land-use Development Plan;
 - that the defining of land usages in the Land-use Development Plans and the Agricultural Zone Development Plans be obligatorily carried out in a spirit of consensus with representatives from the UPA;
- **MAPAQ**
 - to show leadership in the development of the agricultural potential of the regions of Québec, in partnership with the agricultural sector;
 - to introduce a program to promote and develop farmland, equipped with an adequate budget in order to subsidize work at a level comparable to what is available in the forestry sector;

22. ENERGY EAST PIPELINE PROJECT

WHEREAS the TransCanada Corporation plans on developing its Energy East Pipeline Project, which entails the installation of an oil pipeline from the Ontario border through to the New Brunswick border;

WHEREAS the majority of landowners affected by this project are farmers and foresters;

WHEREAS, if this project goes ahead, TransCanada Corporation will obtain a right-of-way and other rights on the land that the pipeline crosses, while the farmers and foresters will continue to be the landowners and would be the first to be affected by any impacts due to the presence of this infrastructure on their land;

WHEREAS the construction of such a pipeline will have an impact on the farmers and foresters, both during the construction phase and the subsequent phases of operation, maintenance, abandonment and post-abandonment;

WHEREAS the UPA has the right to represent farmers and foresters in Québec and is able to undertake collective actions provincially;

WHEREAS the UPA has negotiated framework agreements of a general nature with various promoters;

WHEREAS the objective when signing a framework agreement is to defend the judicial rights and economic interests of farmers and foresters, while taking into account any environmental concerns;

WHEREAS this project will affect both present and future farmers and foresters;

WHEREAS it would be possible to avoid much of the farmland if the pipeline was buried in the center median of the divided highways, as was possible for the *Train de l'Est*;

ENERGY EAST PIPELINE PROJECT (CONTINUED)

THE GENERAL CONGRESS THEREFORE CALLS UPON:

➤ **The governments of Canada and Québec**

- To obtain an environmental assessment before the construction of any new oil or gas pipeline;

➤ **The National Energy Board**

- To oblige the pipeline companies to put into a reserve sufficient funds to meet their obligations in cases of abandonment of their pipelines and during the post-abandonment period, and to monitor the management of these funds;
- to oblige the pipeline companies to include a UPA representative for the management of the trusts that will administer the funds necessary for abandonment and post-abandonment, as well as on any committee that will make decisions affecting these funds;
- to ensure that the pipeline companies have adequate insurance coverage or the necessary funds for rapid response to any spills or leaks;
- to oblige pipeline companies, or any organization representing them, to submit to the farmers and foresters affected by the passage of a pipeline their emergency plan and any other information regarding the safety and integrity of the pipeline;
- to clarify the regime of monetary and administrative sanctions in cases of accidental breaks within the agricultural or forestry areas;

➤ **The Union**

- to negotiate, in collaboration with the concerned affiliated groups, a framework agreement that:
 - protects the rights of farmers and foresters, particularly in cases where there is a leak or spill;
 - obliges the pipeline companies to put aside sufficient funds to meet their obligations when their pipeline is abandoned;
 - defines compensation and damages, while integrating the concept of inter-regional and inter-generational fairness, and more specifically, the periodic payment of an amount that obligatorily includes an annual royalty (annuity, rent, allocation), in addition to any amounts paid for compensation and damages;
 - contains management guidelines for the corridor, outlining permitted activities, activities requiring authorization and prohibited activities;
 - provides for impact mitigation measures and the full-time presence of UPA representatives on the jobsite, with real powers to intervene;
 - ensures that TransCanada Corporation remains responsible for its infrastructures, both during the construction phase, as well as during the phases of operation, abandonment and post-abandonment;
 - considers the possibility of burying the pipeline in the center median of divided highways and pressures the government to this effect;
 - is submitted for consultation to farmers and foresters, before its signature.

23. QUALITY AND SUPPLY OF ELECTRICITY (DISTRIBUTION NETWORK)

WHEREAS many farmers are dissatisfied with the quality of the electricity supply, due to frequent electrical blackouts and significant voltage fluctuations during peak periods;

WHEREAS power failures and voltage fluctuations cause damage to electronic equipment, lowers productivity and often leads to the purchase of costly standby equipment;

WHEREAS agricultural businesses pay electricity rates comparable to other Hydro-Québec clients;

WHEREAS with comparable rates, agricultural businesses should receive comparable services;

THE GENERAL CONGRESS THEREFORE CALLS UPON:

- **The Québec government and Hydro-Québec**
 - To improve the reliability and quality of the electricity supply in the distribution network in all rural areas of Québec;
 - to ensure adequate three-phase (600 V) service in all regions of Québec;
 - to reduce the delays to connect agricultural businesses to the network.

24. PROPERTY TAXES AND MUNICIPAL TAXATION

WHEREAS annual increases in the cost of the Property Tax Credit Program were capped at a maximum of 7% in 2007, 6% in 2008 and 5% per year since 2009;

WHEREAS the high property values of farms and the nature of municipal expenses that are reimbursed will soon cause the ceilings on the program's budget to explode;

WHEREAS municipalities have the possibility to apply distinct tax rates for agricultural businesses;

WHEREAS a distinct rate for agricultural businesses is rarely used by municipalities in spite of the fact that the government planned to make the use of such a tax rate compulsory in 2006;

WHEREAS more and more municipalities are taxing the agricultural sector for services that are specific to the residential sector and for which the agricultural sector benefits very little;

WHEREAS the financing of rural municipalities based on property values puts considerable pressure on the agricultural zone through the expansion of urban perimeters;

WHEREAS the absence of options for current municipal financing forces the municipalities to look to the Property Tax Credit Program as a backdoor method to contribute to their financing;

WHEREAS in MRCs where there is a predominant central town, there exists no regional equalization method to allow an equitable sharing of revenues with less fortunate municipalities;

WHEREAS there is an under-utilization of distinct tax rates by the municipalities;

WHEREAS there has been an increase in cases where genuine farmers have been refused access to the Farm Property Tax Credit Program by MAPAQ because of the application of the criterion of \$8 of revenue per \$100 of evaluation;

PROPERTY TAXES AND MUNICIPAL TAXATION (CONTINUED)

THE GENERAL CONGRESS THEREFORE CALLS UPON:

➤ **The Québec government**

- to impose a moratorium or to suspend for one year the application of the admissibility criterion of \$8 of revenue per \$100 of evaluation in the Farm Property Tax Credit Program, in order to give time for stakeholders to urgently find sustainable solutions to the various problems in this program;
- to find ways for the cost of this program to be borne by other sources, for example the Ministry of Municipal Affairs (MAMROT) without reducing MAPAQ's budget;

➤ **MAMROT**

- to modify the *Municipal Taxation Act* and any other pertinent law or regulation in the following manner:
 - to oblige municipalities to use a separate fee structure to finance certain services such as recreation, public security, public transportation, etc.;
 - to apply equalization in order to fairly share municipal revenues at the MRC level;
 - to force the utilization of a distinct agricultural tax rate by municipalities;
 - to exclude the taxation of certain agricultural structures linked to production (silos, manure tanks, etc.) for agricultural businesses;
 - to evaluate farms based on their agronomic value;
 - to take into account in-family sales of farms, instead of only the general and speculative market values;
 - to introduce dissuasive measures, such as charging a surtax on land left uncultivated;

PROPERTY TAXES AND MUNICIPAL TAXATION (CONTINUED)

➤ **MAPAQ**

- to ensure that the Farm Property Tax Credit Program has the budget necessary to continue to play its role and, in this regard, that MAPAQ closely monitors municipalities;
- to revise the admissibility criterion of \$8 of revenue per \$100 of evaluation in the Farm Property Tax Credit Program.

25. FOR A LAND TAX SYSTEM ADAPTED TO FORESTRY PRODUCTION

WHEREAS the *Fédération des producteurs forestiers du Québec* has analyzed the progression of 50,000 evaluation units of woodlots in all Québec municipalities from 1997 to 2012;

WHEREAS the tax load on woodlot owners has increased by an average of 155% over this period, compared to 133% for single-family residential dwellings;

WHEREAS the increased land taxes reduces the profitability and competitiveness of good forestry practices in the private forest sector;

WHEREAS an increase in forestry activities in the private forest sector could compensate for the significant decrease in harvesting allocations in the public domain;

WHEREAS an improved Property Tax Rebate Program for certified forestry producers would motivate them to be more active in their woodlot improvements;

WHEREAS during the *Rendez-vous de la forêt privée*, held on May 30, 2011, the Québec government promised to revise this program before April 1, 2013;

WHEREAS numerous jurisdictions, including Ontario and the majority of American states, use land tax measures to motivate woodlot owners to improve their forest;

FOR A LAND TAX SYSTEM ADAPTED TO FORESTRY PRODUCTION (CONTINUED)

THE GENERAL CONGRESS THEREFORE CALLS UPON:

➤ The Québec government

- to approve the modifications to the Regulation respecting the reimbursement of property taxes to certified forestry producers and to the Sustainable Forest Development Act, already agreed upon by the Forum des partenaires provinciaux de la forêt privée, under the jurisdiction of the Ministry of Natural Resources;
- to add a specific category to Article 240 and subsequent articles of the Municipal Taxation Act to permit municipalities to adopt a distinct property taxation rate for woodlot properties exploited by a certified forestry producer as recognized under Article 130 of the Sustainable Forest Development Act;
- to modify Article 488 of the Cities and Towns Act to exclude woodlot properties exploited by a certified forestry producer from the obligation to contribute to taxes regarding public transportation;
- to modify the taxation laws so that certified forestry producers may receive the same treatment as agricultural producers with regard to the maximum value of school taxes;

➤ The Union

- to continue all of the representations necessary with the Québec government to obtain a revision of the Property Tax Reimbursement Program aimed at certified forestry producers, the Sustainable Forest Development Act and the Municipal Taxation Act.

26. FRAMEWORK AGREEMENT WITH THE QUÉBEC MINISTRY OF TRANSPORT (MTQ)

WHEREAS many requests are submitted to *the Commission de protection du territoire agricole du Québec* (CPTAQ) each year for the construction and improvement of roads in the agricultural zone;

WHEREAS these works intrude upon cultivated farmland;

WHEREAS there is presently no agreement between the Québec Ministry of Transport (MTQ) and farmers to define the terms and conditions of compensation;

WHEREAS farmers must negotiate one-on-one with the MTQ;

WHEREAS the amounts paid to farmers for compensation are often pathetic;

WHEREAS producers are not necessarily equipped to verify if the agreement with the MTQ respects their legal and economic rights;

WHEREAS the UPA, in the past, has negotiated several framework agreements with, in particular, Hydro-Québec, Gaz-Métro and Ultramar in order that farmers are fairly compensated for projects that intrude upon the agricultural zone;

FRAMEWORK AGREEMENT WITH THE QUÉBEC MINISTRY OF TRANSPORT (MTQ) (CONTINUED)

THE GENERAL CONGRESS THEREFORE CALLS UPON:

➤ The Union

- To negotiate a framework agreement with the Québec Ministry of Transport (MTQ) in order to:
 - ensure that the legal and economic rights of farmers are respected for work done in the agricultural zone;
 - to permit a UPA representative to intervene on the jobsite;
 - to return any excess expropriated land to the owner;

➤ The MTQ

- to propose alternative solutions for work that would limit the circulation of farm machinery or the access to farmland.

27. MANAGEMENT OF WATER FROM ROAD DITCHES

WHEREAS many road ditches belonging to the Québec Ministry of Transport (MTQ) or municipalities also drain adjacent agricultural land (surface and subsurface drainage);

WHEREAS some of these ditches are not recognized by law as being municipal watercourses and, as such, are not under the jurisdiction of the MRCs, but rather the MTQ or municipalities mandated by the MTQ;

WHEREAS the MTQ and the municipalities are therefore not obligated to ensure the free flow of water in these ditches;

WHEREAS, under these conditions, the farms are faced with an accumulation of water due to the poor drainage of the ditches under the jurisdiction of the MTQ and municipalities;

WHEREAS this surplus of water causes damages and crop losses for the farmers;

WHEREAS the MTQ and municipalities proceed to maintain their ditches only when they cause damage to the road or to the road users, without any regard to the financial losses incurred by the farmers;

THE GENERAL CONGRESS THEREFORE CALLS UPON:

- **The MTQ, municipalities and the MRCs**
 - To ensure a better management of water in the ditches under their respective jurisdictions, thus allowing adequate drainage of the farmland situated along the roadsides, by following the norms applicable to watersheds and ensuring adequate coordination between the various jurisdictions.

28. WIDTH OF BRIDGES

WHEREAS bridges are under the jurisdiction of the Québec Ministry of Transport (MTQ);

WHEREAS the MTQ uses certain criteria for the design of a bridge, such as traffic speed, daily and annual average number of vehicles passing, etc.;

WHEREAS the MTQ uses standard normalized plans for bridges, based on these criteria;

WHEREAS the MTQ reconstructs bridges in rural areas and some of them are rebuilt using different norms than previously;

WHEREAS the risk of accidents is higher when the bridge is narrow;

WHEREAS it is important to take into consideration the location of the bridge and the topography of the area in order to ensure safe conditions;

THE GENERAL CONGRESS THEREFORE CALLS UPON:

- **The Québec Ministry of Transport (MTQ)**
 - to consult with interested parties before renovating or reconstructing a bridge;
 - to not reduce the width of bridges and to widen them when necessary.

WORKSHOP #4

MARKETING AND INTERNATIONAL TRADE



*L'Union des
producteurs
agricoles*

29. AGRICULTURAL OPERATIONS REGULATION (REA)

WHEREAS the complexity of the environmental regulations makes it difficult to ensure permanent compliance;

WHEREAS the *Agricultural Operations Regulation* (known in French as REA) was modified to include administrative monetary penalties (AMPs) and the amount of these penalties have been increased disproportionately;

WHEREAS the MDDEFP has intensified its control activities and some inspectors are overzealous;

WHEREAS the regional directors of the *Centres de contrôle environnemental du Québec* can now impose AMPs when a violation of the law or its regulations is observed;

WHEREAS in cases where an AMP is contested, it is up to the alleged offender to prove that he was not in violation, and this reversal of the burden of proof is questioned by many;

WHEREAS severe fines can be imposed for infractions that are administrative in nature and do not have any effect on the quality of the environment;

WHEREAS considerable time is spent by inspectors to respond to all of the farmers' questions during their control visits, not to mention the resulting costs to agricultural businesses;

WHEREAS the agricultural sector is already subject to cross-compliance rules, which in itself is a severe form of administrative penalty;

WHEREAS agriculture in Québec is primarily practiced by family farms that, even though they may be registered as a company, do not have the same financial means as most of the corporations existing in other economic activity sectors;

WHEREAS there is an obligation to annually submit to the MDDEFP a phosphorus report, even if there have been no changes on the farm and there is no excess phosphorus generated;

WHEREAS uncertainty persists regarding the requirements for livestock exercise areas and wintering pens, and this situation adversely affects investments made to improve these infrastructures;

AGRICULTURAL OPERATIONS REGULATION (REA) (CONTINUED)

WHEREAS exercise areas and wintering sites are necessary installations for raising animals outside and are beneficial to the health and welfare of the animals;

WHEREAS a technical committee consisting of representatives from MAPAQ and MDDEFP was given the mandate to propose new rules regarding exercise areas;

THE GENERAL CONGRESS THEREFORE CALLS UPON:

➤ The MDDEFP

- to exclude the agricultural sector from the application of AMPs and to substantially reduce the amount of the fines;
- to provide an opportunity for farmers to correct their situation, with the help of a corrective measures plan established by the parties and to not proceed with penalties unless corrections are not made, particularly when the infractions are of an administrative nature;
- to simplify its regulations and corresponding administrative measures in order to lighten the burden for agricultural businesses, in particular by reducing the frequency of submitting phosphorus reports;
- to exempt farm businesses from fines for unforeseeable situations causing harm to the environment;
- to adapt and administer the REA and the *Environmental Quality Act* in this regard.

➤ The MDDEFP and MAPAQ

- to agree upon regulatory provisions that permit the operation of exercise areas that are effective at the environmental level, while ensuring the profitability of the farm businesses;
- to ensure that any new environmental requirements adopted by MAPAQ and/or MDDEFP are based on solid current scientific data.

30. MAINTAINING CULTIVATED AREAS

WHEREAS the restrictions dictated by the *Agricultural Operations Regulation* (or REA) do not allow any increases of cultivated land in so-called "degraded" watersheds;

WHEREAS, even though the REA allows the possibility to bring back into cultivation certain land that was already cultivated at least one season between 1990 and 2004, this right is not transferable between owners;

WHEREAS Québec farms are in great demand to be used for purposes other than agriculture (commercial, industrial, residential, public utilities, reforestation, riparian filter strips, energy projects, etc.);

WHEREAS it is necessary to recuperate cultivated land lost due to other usages (urbanization, reforestation, etc.) by authorizing the cropping of equivalent areas;

WHEREAS, for almost 10 years, agriculture has been the only sector forced to reduce the area that it occupies;

WHEREAS farmland is the principal production tool of farmers and only two per cent of Québec's land base can be cultivated;

WHEREAS the loss of cultivated farmland areas hinders the modernization of agricultural activities;

MAINTAINING CULTIVATED AREAS (CONTINUED)

THE GENERAL CONGRESS THEREFORE CALLS UPON:

➤ The MDDEFP

- to revise the regulatory provisions that prohibit the increase of cultivated land in order to establish a mechanism to permit the recuperation of an equivalent area to what was lost to non-agricultural usages;
- to oblige the concerned authorities (municipalities, MTQ, Hydro-Québec, MAPAQ, etc.) to propose solutions to permit the replacement of the total area that can no longer be cultivated because of a non-agricultural use of the cultivated lands;
- to permit the cultivation of new parcels of land cleared due to the installation of energy projects.

31. APPLICATION OF CROSS-COMPLIANCE IN AGRICULTURE

WHEREAS, for the past several years, MAPAQ and the FADQ have included in their various programs (ASRA, financing, tax credits, etc.) a cross-compliance requirement based on the conformity to regulations concerning phosphorus;

WHEREAS agricultural businesses turn to professional services to meet the environmental requirements and to produce the various required documents;

WHEREAS uncontrollable circumstances (climatic conditions, equipment failure, etc.) can interfere with the intended planning and, as a consequence, bring about changes in the phosphorus report, as well as delays in correcting the situation;

WHEREAS sometimes the MDDEFP informs the FADQ of situations of non-compliance a year or more after the phosphorus report is submitted, so that it is impossible to make any changes retroactively;

WHEREAS, in spite of all the information available from the MDDEFP, MAPAQ contacted every agricultural business in 2013 in order to obtain information already available at the MDDEFP;

APPLICATION OF CROSS-COMPLIANCE IN AGRICULTURE (CONTINUED)

THE GENERAL CONGRESS THEREFORE CALLS UPON:

- **The Ministère de Développement durable, de l'Environnement, de la Faune et des Parcs (MDDEFP) and the Financière agricole du Québec (FADQ)**
 - to make it possible for agricultural businesses identified as non-compliant, following the verification of their phosphorus report, to make the necessary corrections using a corrective measures plan established by the concerned parties, before financial penalties are imposed;
- **MAPAQ, the FADQ and MDDEFP**
 - to use the information available at MAPAQ, the FADQ and the MDDEFP in order to not unnecessarily solicit the agricultural businesses, thus avoiding additional time and expense for them;
 - to establish January 1 as the deadline to inform producers of situations of non-compliance that can trigger penalties under the rules of cross-compliance;
- **The Union**
 - to take the necessary steps to revise the application of cross-compliance measures in agriculture, so that they are fair and proportionate to the observed infraction;
 - to assess the validity of any new environmental requirements introduced by the Québec government and any related conditions.

32. RECOGNITION OF FOOD BALANCE SHEETS AND THE REVISION OF THE REGULATION RESPECTING ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT AND REVIEW

WHEREAS, by virtue of the REA and with the objective of preparing a phosphorus report and a fertilization plan, agricultural producers are required to proceed annually with a characterization of their solid and liquid manures, unless they use the reference values published by the CRAAQ, increased to correctly quantify the phosphorus produced;

WHEREAS this requirement is applicable even if the farmer has a food balance sheet that permits the precise measurement of nitrogen and phosphorus discharges;

WHEREAS a study done in Québec in 2012 on estimating the production of phosphorus through the food balance sheet method and by a method to characterize effluent from livestock areas in the production of hogs and poultry concluded, among other things, that the food balance sheet method produced results comparable to those obtained from the characterization method, while presenting less risk of measurement errors;

WHEREAS the food balance sheet method can rapidly establish the annual production of phosphorus from a livestock site and reduce the delay in measuring the effect of any change in the livestock raising practices;

WHEREAS the food balance sheet is a method proposed and accepted in many countries for determining the discharge of nutrients (N and P) at the farm level or for revising the reference values;

WHEREAS the food balance sheet method could be immediately and advantageously used by many agricultural businesses;

WHEREAS discussions are underway with the MDDEFP concerning the recognition of the food balance sheet and the revision of certain provisions in the *Regulation respecting environmental impact and review*, with regard to certain livestock-raising activities;

WHEREAS, contrary to the REA, which refers to the production of phosphorus, the *Regulation respecting environmental impact and review* (REIR) refers rather to the animal units to establish the level at which an environmental impact assessment is required;

RECOGNITION OF FOOD BALANCE SHEETS AND THE REVISION OF THE REGULATION RESPECTING ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT AND REVIEW (CONTINUED)

WHEREAS the appendix referred to in the REIR is outdated and no longer represents the weight categories of today's livestock and could lead to an over-evaluation of the number of animal units;

WHEREAS the level at which an impact study is required was established in an era when the environmental regulations were practically non-existent and should therefore be substantially updated to take into consideration the present context;

THE GENERAL CONGRESS THEREFORE CALLS UPON:

➤ The MDDEFP

- to recognize the use of the food balance sheet method as equivalent to the characterization of the livestock effluent in determining the production of phosphorus from a livestock site and also in the preparation of a phosphorus report;
- to exclude agriculture from the environmental impact and review procedure, since agricultural businesses are already controlled by the annual deposit of a balanced phosphorus report, the characterization of manures and an agro- environmental fertilization plan.

33. REGULATION RESPECTING THE WITHDRAWAL OF WATER AND ITS PROTECTION (RWWP)

WHEREAS the proposed *Regulation respecting the withdrawal of water and its protection* (or RWWP), published in the Official Gazette on May 29, 2013 will soon come into effect;

WHEREAS this regulation will replace the *Groundwater Catchment Regulation* (or GCR) adopted in June 2002;

WHEREAS this proposed regulation, as was the case of the GCR, prohibits certain agricultural activities such as the spreading of manure, the pasturing of animals and the storage of manure in stacks in the field, if done within certain protected areas;

WHEREAS the *Guide sur les principes d'indemnisation des producteurs agricole relativement aux puits municipaux* (2006) provides a basis to establish mitigation measures and compensation;

WHEREAS the lump-sum payments used in the calculation of compensation have not been revised since the publication of the Guide;

WHEREAS the Guide is not obligatory and some municipalities refuse to compensate farmers;

WHEREAS the protected areas of municipal water collection installations should be considered as public utilities, as is the case for the installation of other infrastructures on farmland and woodlots (electrical transmission lines, gas pipelines, roads);

WHEREAS the proposed regulation contains a provision obliging a periodic report on the water-tightness of livestock installations in a bacterial protected area;

WHEREAS the RWWP contains a provision to require an authorization certificate for all water withdrawal greater than 75 m³ per day and a hydro-geological or hydrological study may also be required;

WHEREAS the MDDEFP charges a fee for issuing such an authorization;

WHEREAS the renewable nature of the authorization generates uncertainty for those whose activities depend totally on their ability to withdraw water;

REGULATION RESPECTING THE WITHDRAWAL OF WATER AND ITS PROTECTION (RWWP) (CONTINUED)

WHEREAS agricultural activities are given no priority over usages by other sectors or industries, although they are located in a zone reserved for agriculture;

WHEREAS the adoption by the Québec government of the Food Sovereignty Policy, which aims at increasing the consumption of Québec food products by Québec consumers, cannot be accomplished without an assurance of access to a sufficient quantity of water;

THE GENERAL CONGRESS THEREFORE CALLS UPON:

➤ The Québec government and the MDDEFP

- to adopt the necessary provisions to ensure a fair compensation for farmers affected by the various protected areas where agricultural activities are curtailed or prohibited on present or future sites;
- to require municipalities to prove that a chosen water withdrawal site is one that generates the least inconvenience to the practice of agriculture and forestry;
- to prohibit the installation of a potable water site that causes livestock installations to fall within its bacterial protection zone, and to eliminate the provisions that a report on the water-tightness of the livestock installations will be required if situated in the bacterial protection zone;
- to include in the RWWP a provision to give priority, immediately after human consumption needs, to the withdrawal of water for agricultural purposes;
- to eliminate the obligation to obtain an authorization for all water withdrawals already legally established for agriculture and aquaculture purposes and to recognize these acquired rights;
- do not require costly impact studies to obtain authorization for a new water withdrawal site for agricultural purposes that withdraws more than 75 m³ per day;
- to eliminate the fees charged to obtain an authorization certificate;

REGULATION RESPECTING THE WITHDRAWAL OF WATER AND ITS PROTECTION (RWWP) (CONTINUED)

➤ **MAMROT**

- to update the amounts of financial compensation proposed in the Guide sur les principes d'indemnisation des producteurs agricoles relativement aux puits municipaux (2006);

➤ **The Union**

- to continue with its representations with government authorities with regard to the preparation of framework agreements so that agricultural and forestry businesses that suffer inconveniences due to the presence of a potable water withdrawal site can be adequately compensated and that the land area subjected to restrictions be replaced.

34. WATERCOURSE MAINTENANCE

WHEREAS, in accordance with the Farm Property Tax Credit Program, *the Ministère de l'Agriculture, des Pêcheries et de l'Alimentation du Québec* (MAPAQ) pays to municipalities the sum of tax credits applied on the tax bills the farm owners;

WHEREAS the increase in the cost of the Farm Property Tax Credit Program in relation to the previous year was capped at a maximum of 7% in 2007, 6% in 2008 and 5% per year for each year since 2009;

WHEREAS the total budget for the Program, when calculated using the capped criteria, has practically reached the maximum allowable amount;

WHEREAS it has already been announced that the credit percentages (reimbursements) for the Program could be reduced if budgets are not sufficient;

WHEREAS watercourse work is under the jurisdiction of the municipalities and is performed by the MRCs;

WHEREAS the cost of this work is transferred to the local municipalities and distributed through a special tax;

WHEREAS the local municipality defines the method of distributing the cost of the work;

WHEREAS frequently, the distribution method is not advantageous to the concerned farmers;

WHEREAS the money dedicated to watercourse work represents a negligible portion of the Farm Property Tax Credit Program;

WATERCOURSE MAINTENANCE (CONTINUED)

THE GENERAL THE CONGRESS THEREFORE CALLS UPON:

➤ **The government**

- to modify the applicable laws and regulations in order to require municipal officials to charge the cost of watercourse maintenance work to the municipality's general fund, and that the modalities will be defined by the MRC;

➤ **The UPA**

- to pressure the government so that MAPAQ will ensure that the work is done at reasonable cost, in order to maintain fairness among farmers.

35. ACCESS TO SEEDS NOT TREATED WITH NEONICOTINOIDS

WHEREAS seed suppliers generally offer seeds treated with neonicotinoid insecticides (e.g. PonchoMD, CruiserMD, etc.) for certain crops;

WHEREAS the present situation leads to the more frequent use of these insecticides because of the non-availability of untreated seeds;

WHEREAS neonicotinoids are used on over 30% of cultivated land in Québec each year;

WHEREAS the UPA adheres to the *Stratégie phytosanitaire québécoise* (Québec Plant Health Strategy) with the objective of increasing the adoption of integrated crop pest management and reducing the risks linked to pesticide use on health and the environment, while maintaining the economic sustainability of agricultural activities;

WHEREAS the widespread use of neonicotinoids increases the risk of exposure and potential harmful effects on wild and domestic pollinators;

WHEREAS it is important to continue to distribute information regarding the use of these products, particularly with regard to methods to reduce dust during seeding;

WHEREAS a preliminary risk assessment on bees is being conducted for three insecticides of the neonicotinoid class by the Pest Management Regulatory Agency (PMRA);

WHEREAS there is a lack of research under Québec conditions regarding detection techniques for soil-borne pests, as well as on the infestation levels that justify using treated seeds;

WHEREAS, to obtain a supply of non-treated seed, producers must place their orders by November at the latest;

ACCESS TO SEEDS NOT TREATED WITH NEONICOTINOIDS (CONTINUED)

THE GENERAL CONGRESS THEREFORE CALLS UPON:

- **The concerned stakeholders, including the PMRA**
 - to accelerate the risk assessment on the use of neonicotinoid-type insecticides with regard to pollinators;
- **MAPAQ**
 - to support research on the monitoring techniques for soil-borne pests, including the establishment of the infestation levels that justify the use of neonicotinoids, in the context of Québec growing conditions;
 - to conduct research to find alternative solutions to the use of certain insecticides for controlling soil-borne pests;
 - to continue its efforts with farmers with regard to communications and awareness;
 - to financially support the in-field monitoring activities, as well as modifications to seeding equipment to reduce the production of dust;
- **The Association des Marchands de Semences du Québec**
 - To ensure that farmers in all regions of Québec can have access, at all times, to a wide variety of seed not treated with neonicotinoids, but rather with a fungicide if desired by the farmer, for all crops;
 - that seed without neonicotinoids be offered as a first choice and not the reverse.

36. BAN ON THE SALE OF GENETICALLY MODIFIED ROUNDUP-READY ALFALFA

WHEREAS the UPA's General Congress adopted, in December 2012, a unanimous resolution asking the government of Canada to ban the sale of genetically modified alfalfa that is resistant to glyphosate (GM-RR alfalfa) in Canada;

WHEREAS the Canadian Food Inspection Agency (CFIA) authorized the sale of GM-RR alfalfa in April 2013;

WHEREAS a study on genetically modified organisms (GMO) financed by Agriculture and AgriFood Canada (AAFC), published in August 2012, shows that GM alfalfa can contaminate neighbouring crops of organic alfalfa at great distances, particularly by the transportation of pollen by pollinating insects;

WHEREAS the Canadian Seed Trade Association (CSTA) published its Alfalfa Hay Coexistence Plan for Eastern Ontario in the summer of 2013;

WHEREAS this coexistence plan recommends voluntary management practices and the CSTA disclaims all warranties with regard to information contained in the documentation, as well as any responsibility for losses or damage;

WHEREAS, in its coexistence plan, the CSTA declares that the dairy industry is the principal market for GM-RR alfalfa;

WHEREAS over 70% of Canadian dairy farms are located in Québec and Ontario;

WHEREAS, following the decision by the CFIA to authorize the sale of GM-RR alfalfa, the FABQ, the FPLQ, the *Filière biologique du Québec* and the UPA have strongly deplored this decision by the federal authorities and have reiterated their demand to ban the sale of GM-RR alfalfa;

WHEREAS the position of Québec farmers is supported by Dairy Farmers of Canada;

WHEREAS the use of GMOs is prohibited by the Canadian Organic Standard and that organic alfalfa contaminated with GM alfalfa loses its organic integrity;

BAN ON THE SALE OF GENETICALLY MODIFIED ROUNDUP-READY ALFALFA (CONTINUED)

WHEREAS the organic production sectors (beekeeping, forages, dairy, beef, goats, sheep and lambs) in Québec could face serious economic damage if their crops are contaminated by GM alfalfa;

THE GENERAL CONGRESS THEREFORE CALLS UPON:

- **The government of Canada**
 - To suspend its decision to authorize the registration and sale of GM-RR alfalfa in Canada until the CFIA and AAFC can clearly demonstrate that the introduction of GM-RR alfalfa does not at any time compromise the production and market access of various other agricultural sectors;
- **MAPAQ**
 - to support Québec farmers and intervene in their favour with the federal government;
- **The Association des Marchands de Semences du Québec**
 - to show solidarity with the position of Québec farmers who are clearly opposed to the sale of GM-RR alfalfa.

37. RECUPERATION OF PLASTICS USED IN AGRICULTURE

WHEREAS plastic materials are very prevalent in the agricultural industry (bale wrap for hay and silage, bags for grain and feed storage, maple production tubing, horticultural plastic coverings, etc.);

WHEREAS feed mills can no longer recuperate the grain and feed bags because of the HACCP regulations;

WHEREAS all the plastic wrap and bags used in agriculture represents a considerable quantity of garbage that is disposed of mainly in landfill sites;

WHEREAS plastics are, in effect, energy reserves that can be converted to synthetic fuels or heat energy;

WHEREAS there exists some recovery and recycling facilities for these plastics in some regions of Québec;

WHEREAS the 2011-2015 action plan of the *Politique québécoise de gestion des matières résiduelles* [Québec Residual Materials Management Policy] has an objective to recycle 70% of waste plastics;

WHEREAS there is no true portrait of the situation for the recovery and recycling of plastics used in agriculture;

WHEREAS farmers are concerned about the protection of the environment and put a lot of effort and investment into it;

RECUPERATION OF PLASTICS USED IN AGRICULTURE (CONTINUED)

THE GENERAL CONGRESS THEREFORE CALLS UPON:

➤ **Recyc-Québec**

- to prepare a portrait of the situation with regard to waste plastics used in agriculture, including a characterization analysis (volumes, types of plastic, etc.), as well as the selective collection programs that exist in some municipalities or MRCs, and the potential markets for these plastics;
- to coordinate with the concerned government authorities a program to provide farmers with sustainable solutions for the recovery and recycling of plastics used in agriculture, horticulture and maple production.

38. PREVENTION AND COMPENSATION FOR DAMAGES CAUSED BY WILDLIFE

WHEREAS farmers suffer recurring damages and significant losses caused by waterfowl (Snow geese, Canada geese, Sandhill cranes), wild turkeys and wild animals (whitetail deer, coyotes, wolves, bears);

WHEREAS migratory birds have adopted agricultural crops as their principal source of food and their numbers remain too high in spite of the efforts being made, particularly by farmers (bird-scaring techniques, agreements with waterfowl hunters, collaboration in programs to identify farms available for hunting, etc.);

WHEREAS MAPAQ must decide if it will renew the Geese-Scaring Program for the next several years;

WHEREAS the Geese-Scaring Program is a measure, in addition to spring hunting, which limits the damage to crops by waterfowl;

WHEREAS the Geese-Scaring Program should be enhanced to improve its effectiveness and to meet increasing costs (fuel, more travel due to wider geese displacement, difficulty in recruiting geese-scarers, etc.);

WHEREAS the current compensation program for damages caused by waterfowl, administered by the *Financière agricole du Québec* (FADQ) for farmers provides compensation at 80% of the losses;

WHEREAS in Québec there is no equivalent to the "waterfowl program" under provincial jurisdiction to specifically compensate for damages to crops, woodlots and livestock by wild animals;

WHEREAS it is important to not transfer to farmers the harmful effects due to the high wildlife populations existing in the Québec territory;

WHEREAS the technique of windrowing is a current practice often necessary to harvest grain at an earlier stage and thus avoid a total loss of the crop in certain regions that have particular climatic conditions (short growing season, rainy fall, etc.);

PREVENTION AND COMPENSATION FOR DAMAGES CAUSED BY WILDLIFE (CONTINUED)

WHEREAS the FADQ no longer covers damages caused by waterfowl if the grain is windrowed later than September 20;

WHEREAS the population of wild turkeys is constantly increasing in many regions of Québec, as well as damages that they cause to crops; furthermore, hunting conditions are too restrictive to control the population;

WHEREAS the Relocation Program for Wild Turkeys contributed to the population increase;

THE GENERAL CONGRESS THEREFORE CALLS UPON:

➤ **The Québec government**

- so that MAPAQ can reintroduce an enhanced geese-scaring program in order to better limit the damages to crops, and make it effective until 2018;

➤ **The MDDEFP**

- to put in place adequate controls and effective population reduction measures for wild animals that cause damages, adapted to the affected crops, woodlots and livestock, and to inform farmers and foresters;
- to review the existing programs in other Canadian provinces for the compensation of damages and losses caused by wildlife that are under provincial jurisdiction and to analyze, in collaboration with the UPA, the possibility of implementing such programs in Québec;
- To allocate a budget envelope for the development of predator control programs and:
- to ensure that the laws and regulations for hunting are less restrictive;
- to ensure that economic and agronomic damages and losses are taken into account during the revision of wildlife management plans.

PREVENTION AND COMPENSATION FOR DAMAGES CAUSED BY WILDLIFE (CONTINUED)

➤ **The FADQ**

- to ensure that farmers and foresters who incur damages by waterfowl and wild animals are compensated at 100% of the value of the losses;
- to abolish the deadline for windrowing for farmers using the Compensation Program for Damages Caused by Waterfowl;
- to be flexible in the application of programs, particularly with regard to damage assessment, the particularities of the affected crops and their monetary values;
- to inspect the damages within a reasonable delay;
- to lower the minimum area of damage for which compensation can be paid;

➤ **The Union**

- to ensure that no programs for wild turkey relocation be repeated or introduced.

VERTICAL INTEGRATION AND CONTRACT FARMING IN AGRICULTURE IN QUÉBEC



*L'Union des
producteurs
agricoles*

39. VERTICAL INTEGRATION AND CONTRACT FARMING IN AGRICULTURE IN QUÉBEC

WHEREAS the objectives that the UPA set for itself at the start of consultations in December 2012 concerning the phenomenon of vertical integration and contract farming in agriculture were:

- to share a common understanding of the phenomenon of vertical integration and contract farming in agriculture;
- to come up with methods to preserve and develop farmers' entrepreneurial abilities and management autonomy;

WHEREAS there have been demands for the development of programs adapted to the realities of independent farm businesses and to maintain the programs based on the cost of production;

WHEREAS the results of a recent study outlined measures introduced elsewhere in the world to govern contractual practices;

WHEREAS it is important to re-establish the possibility for all farmers to choose the independent production business model, if they wish;

THE GENERAL CONGRESS THEREFORE CALLS UPON:

- **The Union, in collaboration with the concerned specialized groups**
 - to define and advocate for measures that will ensure increased transparency and better contractual practices in the various production sectors, particularly in identifying solutions developed in the United States and in Europe that could be applied in Québec via the *Act respecting marketing* or other legislative tools;
 - to ensure that maintaining and developing independent agricultural businesses is one of the guiding principles of the agricultural policies and programs;
 - in the current revision of income security programs:
 - to preserve the programs that allow farmers to recover their costs of production;

VERTICAL INTEGRATION AND CONTRACT FARMING IN AGRICULTURE IN QUÉBEC (CONTINUED)

- to ensure transparency in the distribution of funds by these programs;
 - to make the necessary representations to ensure that independent businesses have access to financing adapted to their realities and that they can benefit from:
 - adequate coaching (guidance) when they are having difficulties;
 - targeted programs (e.g., adaptation programs);
 - access to advisory services and training at reasonable cost, as well as access to independent research results;
 - support for young and beginning farmers, as well as for retiring farmers;
 - to monitor contractual practices in all production sectors;
 - to ensure that independent production remains as the favoured business model choice in all production sectors;
- **The Union and specialized groups**
- To develop model contracts containing obligatory minimal clauses;
 - to favour networking for independent producers (group sales and purchases, access to inputs);
 - to regularly update the contractual costs of production (building rentals, labour, etc.) and communicate this information to farmers;
 - to take into account the needs and expectations of farmers producing under contract and to encourage their participation within the trade union structure;
 - the work to improve the balance of power of farmers in order to ensure a more fair sharing of the gains within the agrifood value chain;
 - to introduce the notion of business sustainability during all discussions;

VERTICAL INTEGRATION AND CONTRACT FARMING IN AGRICULTURE IN QUÉBEC (CONTINUED)

➤ **The Québec government**

- to introduce monitoring mechanisms on prices and profit margins of the various links in the agrifood value chain (input suppliers, processors, distributors, retailers), in order to bring more transparency to the entire chain.

Union Fundamentals and Directions 2013-2015



*L'Union des
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